PATTERNS OF POWER · CASE STUDY · FRANCE

Eight Regimes, One Register

France, 1789–1871 — How a State That Destroyed Its Anchor Discovered That Title Could Be Lifted Out and Put in a Registry, What the Fastest Manufactured Ground in the Record Cost, and Why the Vendée Is the Strongest Refutation of False Consciousness Anyone Has

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with Claude (Anthropic) · 2026

held as tested, not revealed

Preface: what this study is

The collaboration, the volume it re-reads, and the promise that it stands alone.

This study belongs to the Patterns of Power project and is a collaboration. The questions, the direction, the case selection and the final judgement are the author's; the historical synthesis, the drafting and the scholarly retrieval were done with Claude, Anthropic's model, with every load-bearing claim checked against a source before anything was built on it.

The project is not an attempt to prove a theory. It is a search for structural dynamics behind one question — how a distribution of holdings taken by force becomes an order armed men will defend rather than contest — and the cases that break the framework are worth more than the ones that confirm it.

This study grows out of an earlier volume in the project, **The France Series**, which traced the most violent and compressed political cycling in modern Western history and delivered three findings: that power at the scale of a country is **opaque** to the people it governs, in two ways that are one structure — they see the faces and not the network, and they see what power takes and not what it does; that belief cannot be replaced by decree, because belief lives in formation and formation requires an institution operating across lifetimes; and that after an arrangement is destroyed, every surviving position converges on a **stabiliser**, which is what produces the rebuilder.

All three stand. What the framework built since adds is a fourth finding that the volume contains without naming, and which this study argues is the most consequential thing the French case has to teach anybody.

France is where the source of legitimacy and the system of title came apart and ran independently for a century. Eight governing arrangements between 1789 and 1871, each with a different account of why anyone should be obeyed — divine right, national sovereignty, the general will, plebiscitary empire, legitimist restoration, a crown conferred by a chamber, a republic, a second empire. And beneath all of it, from 1804, one civil code and one registry of property that **did not change once**, and that every regime inherited, applied and depended on.

The framework's name for what a code of that kind does is the **horizontal function** — the job of making every holder's title checkable against a single source, so that an attack on any registers with all. That function is normally performed by an anchor through an interpretive class. France is where it was lifted out, put into a statute and an

administration, and made to run **without any anchor at all** — which is why French property survived the collapse of eight legitimating stories laid over it, and which is, this study argues, the actual structure of the modern state rather than any particular story it tells.

Three further contributions follow: that the Cult of the Supreme Being is the **fastest failure of a manufactured ground anywhere in this project's archive**, and the cleanest available control for a case the project has struggled with; that the Vendée is the strongest refutation of the false-consciousness account of popular belief that exists, because it is the one instance of that theory being applied as policy by men holding a state; and that the eight arrangements can be scored, one by one, on a single variable that predicts which of them lasted.

The study stands alone. No prior reading is assumed — not of this project, not of French history, not of any statute or scholar named.

One discipline governs throughout, and here it governs hard. The period examined killed on the order of a million and a half French people, and this study will describe some of that killing as structurally predicted. That is an explanation and emphatically not a defence, and Part XII is not an appendix. This project states the obligation in the phrase *legibility is not pardon*.

The question

Eight answers to why anyone should obey, and one thing that never moved.

Between the convening of the Estates-General in May 1789 and the suppression of the Paris Commune in May 1871, France passed through eight governing arrangements, separated by three revolutions, two coups and two empires.

Each of them gave a different answer to the question of why anybody should be obeyed. A king by divine right and ancient descent. A constitutional monarchy resting on a nation's sovereignty. A republic resting on the general will. A directory resting on a procedure. An emperor resting on a plebiscite, a new dynasty and a borrowed coronation. A restored line resting on legitimacy by blood. A king conferred by a chamber of deputies. A second republic; a second empire; and at last a third republic that lasted seventy years.

And underneath all of it, from 1804, one thing did not move.

The Civil Code was promulgated in March of that year. It replaced hundreds of overlapping customary and Roman-law regimes with a single national law of persons, property, contract and inheritance. Every regime that followed inherited it. Every regime applied it. No regime replaced it, and the property titles registered under it passed through the fall of an empire, two restorations, two revolutions, a coup and a siege without being reopened.

So the question this study asks is not why France cycled. It is why the cycling did not reach the deeds.

A man in Normandy who held a field in 1810 held it in 1816 under a restored Bourbon, in 1832 under a king conferred by a chamber, in 1850 under a republic, in 1855 under an emperor and in 1875 under a republic again. The story about why anybody should be obeyed changed eight times. **His title did not change once**, and nobody at any point in that sequence proposed reopening it.

That is a fact about how a modern state actually holds together, and this project's framework did not have it.

The framework, compressed

Possession, ownership, the anchor, the interpreter, the floor.

Everything below rests on a distinction ordinary speech collapses.

Possession is what force holds now. It is present-tense and expires when the capacity sustaining it expires — at illness, at absence, and completely at death.

Ownership is a claim about the future and about other people: that this will be mine tomorrow while I sleep, and that when I die you will treat my son as its holder. Ownership is not a relation between a person and a thing; it is a structure of expectations about how other people will behave across time.

Force is sovereign over the first and impotent over the second. **The part of a holding force cannot reach is exactly what makes it a holding, and it must therefore be manufactured out of something that is not force.**

The coordination failure. Everyone in a world of armed men would prefer a settlement, and that explains nothing, because the question is why one holds when breaking it would pay. The decisive calculation is the **bystanders'**: each asks whether a seizure is his quarrel, and absent a common ground of title the answer is no — intervening buys casualties and an enemy, and intervening alone makes him the next target. So all wait, each knowing the others reason identically. **Warlordism is a coordination failure among the men who might have punished it, not a moral failure.**

The anchor. Give every holding one source and the arithmetic inverts: an attack on any title becomes an attack on the ground beneath all of them, and a coalition forms that nobody has to lead. It works on expectations rather than wills — a man abstains not because he believes but because he can count.

From which the condition that organises this study: **a party competing for the spoils cannot be the author of who gets them**, because a title granted by a competitor is a forecast about that competitor's health. So the source must be **unforgeable by the current claimants**, and a settlement holds only where the anchor is the **sole author** of the holders' titles.

Where such material comes from. The property required — *no current claimant made this* — is a fact about history rather than a feature of design, and facts about history cannot be added later. A ruler can build the temple, endow the priesthood and stage the ceremony; he cannot make it true that he did not. So the material must come

from before the players existed and must have been made for something else. The raw material cannot be manufactured; its **assembly** can be, provided it is presented as recovery and the assembler is not the beneficiary.

The interpreter, and the two jobs. An anchor does not read itself. The class that reads it does two separable jobs: the **vertical** job of telling the apex no, which requires that the apex cannot revoke his standing; and the **horizontal** job of making every holder's title checkable against one source, which requires only that he be **singular**. Capture destroys the first almost at once and leaves the second untouched.

The floor is the coercive capacity that makes verdicts land, and it is not bedrock: an army is a set of armed men each of whom could refuse, so it has the same coordination problem one scale down, and it can evaporate without a battle when the forecast changes.

And two audiences. For the armed and administrative few, an anchor requires no belief at all — only the expectation that the others will act on it. For the mass, what makes rule cheap is that the arrangement is experienced as simply how things are; and belief of that kind is installed by **formation**, which operates on children and therefore requires an institution running across lifetimes. **The slow ingredient is a formed population**, and no decree reaches it.

Part I — What was destroyed

Three layers, and why removing them looked safe.

The Bourbon order rested on three things, and the France Series' central argument is about why the men who dismantled it could see only one.

An anchor thirteen centuries deep. A Catholic formation carried by an institution that reached every parish in the kingdom, installed in childhood before anyone could weigh it, and experienced by the population not as a doctrine but as the shape of the world. On the framework's scoring the French credential had been **domestic since 1516**, when the Concordat of Bologna gave the crown the right to nominate archbishops, bishops, abbots and priors while reserving canonical institution to the pope. So the vertical function was long dead — there was no French Canossa — and the horizontal function ran at full strength, with the church as a singular source through which the order's legitimacy was transmitted to the population.

A floor. The largest standing army in Europe — roughly a hundred and seventy thousand men in peacetime, expandable past three hundred thousand — which is why France's borders were where they were rather than where its neighbours' ambitions would have redrawn them.

And an apparatus. The intendant system established under Richelieu and elaborated for a century and a half: a centralising administration that moved grain into Paris, enforced contracts, maintained roads, collected revenue and held a currency at value.

The opacity, and why it matters structurally

The France Series' first great finding is that the population could see almost none of this, in two ways that are one structure.

Opacity of the network. People see the faces of power — the king, the minister, the tax collector, the priest — and not the structure those faces belong to. They cannot see how few the governing centre actually is, and imagine a vast impersonal apparatus where a few rooms would have held the men whose choices set the direction of a kingdom of twenty-eight million.

Opacity of function. People see what power *takes* — the tax, the tithe, the conscription — and not what power *does*, because **coordination is invisible precisely**

while it works, and you cannot see what is being prevented. The peasant whose *taille* paid for the army experienced the tax. He did not experience the invasion that did not happen.

The framework has a name for the second half and it sharpens the finding into something uncomfortable. This project's measure of a successful settlement is **cheapness**: an order that is believed runs quietly, requires little force, and does not have to be visible. Which means:

> ***The better a coordinating apparatus works, the more it looks like pure extraction*** *— because everything it produces is an absence, and absences are not observed. Visibility is a symptom of failure, so competence is systematically mistaken for parasitism.*

That is a prediction with a shape: apparatuses should be most vulnerable to removal **at their peak efficiency**, not at their worst. And it explains why the French radicals could believe, sincerely, that under each layer they removed lay a benign natural reality the layer merely masked — remove the priest and a free rational citizen stands revealed; remove the apparatus and a self-governing people coordinates itself; remove the king and the visible great and power itself is gone.

They were wrong the same way three times, and the framework says why: each layer was not a mask over a benign reality but a load-bearing structure, and what lay beneath was not freedom but a formed population, a broken supply chain and a vacancy into which force rushed.

Part II — The fastest manufactured ground in the record

Seven weeks, and the control the project has needed.

The Revolution attempted, over five years, to replace a thirteen-century formation by decree — and it is the single most instructive attempt in this project's archive, because it was performed by men holding a functioning state and it failed faster than anything else on record.

The sequence

The **Civil Constitution of the Clergy** of 1790 reorganised the church as a department of the state, made clergy salaried officials, required an oath, and split the French priesthood in half between those who swore and those who refused.

The **dechristianisation** campaign of 1793–94 closed churches, seized bells and plate, and persecuted refractory clergy.

The **Cult of Reason** was installed in its place, and then displaced by the **Cult of the Supreme Being**, a deistic civil religion promulgated by Robespierre and inaugurated with an enormous public festival in Paris on **8 June 1794**.

And a new **calendar**, with ten-day weeks, abolished Sunday.

The result

Robespierre fell on 27 July 1794 and was executed the following day. The festival had been seven weeks earlier. The Cult did not survive him. The Catholic faith continued in hiding and re-emerged the moment the persecution lifted, and within seven years a First Consul was negotiating with a pope to bring it back.

Why the framework says this was certain

The project's origin argument is that the property a source of legitimacy needs — *no current claimant made this* — is a fact about history, so the raw material cannot be manufactured. What can be assembled is a **new arrangement of old material**, and

only on two conditions: that it be presented as a recovery, and that the assembler not be the beneficiary of what it authorises.

The Cult of the Supreme Being satisfied neither, and had no old material at all.

It was a philosophical abstraction drawn from the reading of an educated minority. It had no formed believers, because formation operates on children across lifetimes and this had existed for weeks. It had no transmission institution — no seminaries, no parish structure, no trained clergy, nothing that reaches a population repeatedly across a generation. It had no antiquity to claim and did not claim any; it was announced as new, which the framework says no ground has ever survived being. And its author presided over the festival that inaugurated it, in a state he substantially directed — assembler and beneficiary in the same man, watched by everybody.

Set beside the archive's other manufacture failures: **Diocletian's** sacralisation of his own person, propped up beside a manufactured cult of Jupiter and Hercules while the existing faith was persecuted, outlived his abdication by nothing. **Henry VIII's** Supreme Headship was demoted by his own daughter within a generation. **Akbar's** attestation of 1579 died with him.

The Cult beat all of them, and it is worth stating why the comparison is fair. Robespierre had **more** state apparatus than any of them: a centralised administration, a national police, a controlled press, a revolutionary calendar and an army. Everything was held constant except the material. **Seven weeks.**

The control this supplies

This matters beyond France, because this project has had to concede, in three separate studies, that its manufacture prediction had not landed in a case it cares about.

Iran's doctrine of clerical rule was assembled by a named man in the 1970s, attacked at the time as an innovation by the pre-eminent jurists of its own tradition, and has organised a state for forty-seven years. The framework says visible manufacture fails; that case has declined to demonstrate it.

France isolates the variable. Both are manufactures. Both were denounced as novelties by the existing interpretive establishment. Both were installed by men with a state. The difference is the **stock**:

The Iranian doctrine extended, by analogy, a centuries-old juristic guardianship over those unable to manage their own affairs, resting on a ninth-century occultation, an eighteenth-century emulation system, a millennium-old mourning calendar and a functioning seminary structure with its own transmission. **It was an assembly of old material presented as recovery.**

The Cult of the Supreme Being extended nothing. It was a new proposition with nothing behind it.

> ***The raw material cannot be manufactured; the assembly can. Iran assembled and France minted, and the difference between forty-seven years and seven weeks is the difference between the two.***

That is the cleanest confirmation of the origin argument in the corpus, and this project did not have it.

Part III — The Vendée

A theory of belief, applied as policy, by men holding a state.

In March 1793 the countryside of the west rose against the Republic, and the rising was crushed over the following two years with a savagery that produced the largest death toll of the revolutionary period — estimates ranging widely, and contested among historians, in the region of a hundred and twenty thousand to two hundred thousand and beyond, with the further question of whether the campaign constituted genocide the subject of a long and unresolved scholarly dispute.

This study is interested in one thing about it, and it is not the number. It is that the rising falsified a theory of belief that its opponents held, and that they held it sincerely, and that they had acted on it.

The theory, and where it comes from

The radicals' picture of the population was that ordinary people were held in obedience by priests who did not themselves believe, and that the belief was a manipulation practised on the credulous by an interested class. Remove the priest and the free rational citizen stands revealed.

That is, in its essentials, the account of popular belief that would later be systematised: that ruling ideas are the ideas of the ruling class, and that the ruled comply because they hold a picture of the world produced by others and serving interests not their own. This project has argued against that account elsewhere, on structural grounds — that the property a ground requires cannot be manufactured by the people who need it, and that a person holding a metaphysical view about the order of the world is not thereby mistaken about his rent.

France is the one place where the theory was tested as policy, and the test is unusually clean, because the radicals were not cynics. The France Series is right that this was a sincere mistake — men projecting the contents of their own formation onto people whose minds had never been touched by the books that had formed them.

The result

The peasantry of the west did not experience the removal of their priests as liberation. They rose, in enormous numbers, in defence of an institution the theory said was oppressing them — and they fought for two years, and were destroyed.

> ***The population was formed, the formation was its own real belief, and the price of the misreading was the largest mass killing in revolutionary France's record.***

That is a kind of evidence almost nothing else in this project's archive supplies. Structural arguments about belief are ordinarily inferences from behaviour under regimes that did not test them. **Here a theory of belief was held by men with a state, converted into policy, and refuted in the field**, and the refutation is measured in bodies.

What it establishes and what it does not

It does not establish that the peasantry's belief was correct, and the framework has no view on that. It does not establish that the Church was benign; the France Series and this project both hold that an institution carrying a population's formation is simultaneously the instrument by which that population is governed cheaply.

What it establishes is the direction of the arrow. If belief were an output of the apparatus — installed by an interested class and sustained by its coercive reach — then removing the class and the reach should have removed the belief, quickly, in a population that had every material reason to welcome the removal. It did the opposite. The belief was in the people, not in the institution, and the institution was its transmission mechanism rather than its source.

Which is the framework's account, and it is worth saying plainly that this is the case where the alternative account has a body count.

Part IV — Warlordism, observed

What an order looks like when nobody can author a title.

Between the fall of Robespierre and the consolidation of the Consulate, France was in the condition this project's whole framework exists to explain, and it is the only case in the archive where that condition can be watched in a literate state with complete records.

Nobody could author a title. The king's ground had been abolished and the man executed. The church's ground had been attacked, its clergy split, its institution seized and then persecuted. The manufactured replacement had died with its author. The sovereignty of the people had been invoked by every faction in turn, each with a plausible claim to speak for it and none able to arbitrate against another.

Which is exactly the framework's definition of the problem. **An anchor's whole function is to be a source of title that no competitor could have made** — and after 1794 every available source was held by a party to the contest. The Convention's claim was a fact about who held the Convention. The Directory's was a fact about a procedure the Directory had written. Each faction's warrant was worth its current strength, which is the definition of possession rather than ownership.

The consequences arrived in the order the framework predicts.

The currency failed, because a currency is a claim about tomorrow underwritten by an authority, and the assignat's authority was a body whose own tenure nobody could forecast.

The commercial economy froze, because contracts are enforceable claims about the future and the courts that would enforce them were being reconstituted by each successive faction.

Grain stopped moving, because the apparatus that had coordinated it had been dismantled along with the men who ran it — which is the France Series' opacity finding arriving as famine.

And the army fell apart on contact with the coalition, because a floor is a set of armed men each of whom could refuse, and the forecast each had been making about the others had been reset.

The convergence

The France Series' third finding is that after the destruction of an arrangement, **every surviving position converges on a stabiliser** — and it names the pattern across the archive: Augustus after the proscriptions, Constantine after the warlord century, Bonaparte after the Directory.

The framework can say what drives the convergence, and it is not fatigue. **Under warlordism every holder's title is worth his current strength, which means every holder is simultaneously exposed to every other.** The bystander mechanism is not merely absent; its absence is expensive to each party individually, and each of them knows it. So the men holding things — land bought from the confiscations, offices, contracts, commissions — have a shared interest that is arithmetic rather than ideological: **any single author is better than none**, because a title from one source is worth more than a title from none.

That is why a stabiliser is accepted rather than merely imposed, and it is why the position is available to whoever can occupy it.

Part V — Napoleon's three moves

Retrofit, apparatus, and the thing nobody had done before.

What Bonaparte built between 1800 and 1804 is, in the framework's terms, three separate operations. Two of them are the standard moves this project finds everywhere. **The third is the one that matters and the one the framework did not have.**

Move one: he bought the old ground back, on the old terms

The **Concordat of 1801**, signed in July of that year, restored the Catholic Church in France. Its terms are worth reading structurally rather than devotionally.

The First Consul would **nominate** archbishops and bishops; the Pope would confer **canonical institution**. Diocesan boundaries were redrawn to match the state's departments. The state would pay clerical salaries. The Church abandoned its claims to the lands confiscated after 1790 — which meant that everyone who had bought them kept them. And before assuming their functions, bishops would swear an oath of obedience and loyalty **directly into the hands of the First Consul**.

That first clause is not new. It is the arrangement of 1516, restored: the standard literature notes explicitly that the papacy retained the power to depose while the French government had nominated bishops since the Concordat of Bologna. **Napoleon did not invent a settlement with the Church. He went back and repurchased the one the monarchy had held for two hundred and seventy-five years.**

Read that through the framework and it is the procurement law executed by a man who had watched the alternative fail in front of him. **It is always cheaper to retrofit an existing belief than to mint a new one**, because the slow ingredient is a formed population and formation cannot be produced in less than a generation. Robespierre had tried to mint, seven years earlier, and got seven weeks. Bonaparte shopped.

And note what he purchased in the same instrument: **a domestic credential**. The state nominates; the Pope invests; the bishops swear to the government. The vertical function stayed dead, exactly as it had been since 1516, and the horizontal function was restored with the state at its head.

Move two: he rebuilt the apparatus with the same men

The prefectures, the Bank of France, the fiscal administration — the coordinating machinery whose absence had produced the famine, the currency collapse and the commercial paralysis.

And the France Series records the fact that matters most here: **the prefectures were staffed by the administrators who had served the Bourbons.** The Revolution had cleared the stage of visible actors and waited to see who would walk on; what walked on was the network that had never been visible enough to be targeted. Which is the opacity finding's other half, and the framework's own point about what conquerors do — **keep the clerks**, because a province cannot be run by men who do not know the district, and the men who know it already exist.

Move three: he put the title system somewhere the story could not reach it

And then he did the thing this study is about.

The **Civil Code**, promulgated in March 1804, replaced the customary and Roman-law regimes of the old provinces with one national law of persons, property, obligation and inheritance. It confirmed the property settlement of the Revolution — the confiscated lands stayed with those who had bought them — abolished feudal tenure definitively, established partible inheritance, and set out the rules of contract and ownership for the whole country in a text that could be read.

The framework's name for what a code of that kind does is the **horizontal function**: making every holder's title checkable against a single source, so that an attack on any registers with all, and so that a holding persists across the death of the man who granted it.

In every other case in this project's archive, that function is performed by an anchor through an interpretive class. The Ottoman *timar*-holder's grant derived from the sultan's authority within a legal order the jurists maintained. The Ganda chief's holding derived from the Kabaka. The medieval English tenant's derived, ultimately, from a crown holding of God.

The Code performs it **without any of that.** It requires no belief about why anyone should be obeyed, no interpretive class whose credential is at issue, and no cosmology whatever. It requires a text, a registry, a court and a clerk — and it is enforced against **things** rather than through anybody's deference.

Which is the position this project has elsewhere called **titled**, identified in a colonial case where an occupying power that could find no seat to capture surveyed the land,

issued deeds and manufactured a class of proprietors — on the discovery that *a title deed requires nobody to believe in the man who holds it.*

Napoleon reached the same solution from inside a collapse rather than from outside a conquest, and for the same reason: the story was unavailable, and the holdings still had to be secured.

Part VI — The decoupling

Eight regimes, one register, and what that says about modern states.

Now the finding.

From 1804 the French state ran two systems that had previously been one, and they came apart cleanly.

Above: the story. Why anyone should be obeyed, which changed eight times in sixty-six years and was contested, violently, at every change.

Below: the register. Who owns what, which did not change at all.

Every regime that took power inherited the Code and applied it. The restored Bourbons did not reopen the property settlement of the Revolution, though their supporters wanted to and the *émigrés* had a case in equity that any of them could state. The July Monarchy did not. The Second Republic did not. The Second Empire did not. **A settlement of holdings produced by the most radical redistribution in modern European history was ratified by every subsequent regime including the ones founded on repudiating it.**

That is not an accident of politics and the framework can say why it happened.

Why nobody reopened it

The bystander mechanism, applied to title-holders rather than to armed peers. Every holder of a deed under the Code had an interest identical to every other holder's: that titles registered under the Code be honoured. **Reopening any of them reopens the principle beneath all of them** — and since the Code covered the whole country and every form of property, the coalition with an interest in its stability was, effectively, everyone who owned anything.

Which means a returning regime faced a choice between restoring a class of dispossessed supporters and challenging the title of every proprietor in France. **The coalition was larger than the grievance, every time**, and it did not have to organise, because it did not have to do anything except not cooperate.

What that makes the Code

> ***A registry is a horizontal function with the anchor removed*** *— and it is more robust than an anchor precisely because it makes no claim that can be disbelieved.*

An anchor can be doubted, contested, forked, defrocked, superseded or ridiculed, and this project's archive is a catalogue of those events. **A registry cannot be disbelieved.** It can be destroyed, ignored, or corruptly administered — but it makes no proposition about the order of the world that anybody could dissent from, so the ordinary failure modes of a legitimating story do not reach it.

Which is why the French property settlement survived the collapse of divine right, the collapse of the Revolution's own civil religion, the collapse of a plebiscitary empire, two restorations and two further revolutions. **The men fighting over the story had no quarrel with the register, and each of them needed it on the day they took power.**

And why this is not a solution

The framework's caution belongs immediately, because the finding invites an over-reading.

A registry does the horizontal job and does not do the rest. It secures holdings among people who already accept that holdings are secured; it says nothing about who may rule, arbitrates no contested succession, restrains no apex, and forms nobody. France's eight regimes are the demonstration: the Code did not prevent a single one of the collapses, because **the thing that was collapsing was not the title system.**

So the decoupling produces a characteristic modern condition rather than a stable one: **a country whose property is more secure than its government**, in which economic life continues serenely through political convulsions that would once have been existential, and in which the question of who should rule is never settled because nothing in the durable layer answers it.

And the register has one exposure the framework insists on naming. It is administered by a state, and it protects holders only for as long as the state that keeps it wants it kept. **A registry is not an anchor, and it is not unforgeable** — it is a book, and whoever holds the pen can rewrite an entry. What has protected it, in France as elsewhere, is precisely the coalition described above, and coalitions are contingent.

Part VII — The cycling, scored

Eight arrangements, one variable, and the one that lasted.

The framework's operational proposition is that a settlement holds only where the anchor is the sole author of the holders' titles, and cannot hold where the warrant is authored by a party to the contest. Run that over the eight arrangements and the sequence is legible.

Constitutional monarchy, 1789–92. Two authors, by construction: a king whose claim was ancient and divine, and an assembly whose claim was national sovereignty, each with a genuine title and neither able to arbitrate against the other. That is the second-author problem in its purest available form, and the framework's prediction is that it resolves by force rather than by argument, because argument requires an arbiter and the arbiter's identity is what is disputed. Three years.

The Republic and the Convention, 1792–95. The sovereignty of the people is an unforgeable ground and an unusable one, because **a crowd cannot author.** Its claim is a fact about who is currently assembled, which is the definition of a claim that expires — so every faction could invoke it and none could be refuted by it. Which is why the period's politics is a sequence of factions denouncing each other as enemies of a people all of them claimed to embody, with the guillotine as the only available arbiter.

The Directory, 1795–99. A procedure with no ground beneath it, written by the men it empowered. Four years, ending in a coup.

The Consulate and Empire, 1799–1814. Bonaparte assembled a warrant from four sources at once — plebiscite, the restored Church, a new dynasty, and a coronation staged with a pope present at which he placed the crown on his own head. That last act is the framework's problem in a tableau: **it was watched, by everyone, and it was his own hand.** The Empire's ground was personal and it consumed itself with the man, exactly as the framework says a personal anchor does — leaving behind, as the France Series says, the construction rather than the claim.

The Restoration, 1814–30. Here the framework's expectation is confounded and the confounding is instructive. Legitimist monarchy is a genuinely unforgeable anchor with centuries behind it — and it lasted fifteen years. The reason is not that the claim was new but that it had been **publicly interrupted**. An anchor's strength is that nobody alive watched it being made; this one had been abolished, and every adult in France had watched it be abolished and had watched the country continue. **A restored**

anchor is not an old anchor. It is a claim whose removability has been demonstrated in living memory, which is a different and much weaker object.

The July Monarchy, 1830–48. The clearest bad case in the sequence. Louis-Philippe took the title **King of the French**, by act of the Chamber of Deputies — a warrant explicitly conferred by a body that was itself a party to the contest, and openly so, as a deliberate contrast to a crown held of God. The framework predicts maximum fragility and eighteen years is what it got.

The Second Republic and Second Empire, 1848–70. Plebiscite again, and a dynastic claim forty-eight years old, resting on the memory of a man rather than on a line. It ended when the floor was destroyed by a foreign army, which by this project's rules is not a test of the settlement.

The Third Republic, 1870–1940. Seventy years, and the France Series names the mechanism: the long-delayed minimum concession, plus — decisively — the Ferry Laws.

Part VIII — Formation at the right speed

What Ferry did that Robespierre could not.

The France Series' closing finding is the one this study would most want carried into the framework, because it is the constructive form of a constraint the project has only ever stated negatively.

The project's position has been that **the slow ingredient is a formed population**: belief lives in formation, formation operates on children, and an institution that reaches a population repeatedly across lifetimes is the only thing that produces it — from which it follows that no decree reaches a formed mind, and that an architect who mints must pay in coercion for the decades his first formed cohorts take to grow.

Robespierre attempted the change in months, by decree, while persecuting the existing institution. He got seven weeks and the Vendée.

Ferry did it in decades, by building a competing institution. Free, compulsory and secular primary schooling, staffed by a trained teaching corps, reaching every commune, forming the next generation at the same depth and over the same span as the institution it was displacing.

The framework's statement of the difference is short: **the two men had the same objective and differed on whether to accept the generation.** One tried to reach into formed minds and was refuted by them. The other left the formed minds alone and took the children — which is the only method that has ever worked, and which is also, stated without euphemism, what every order in this archive does to its own population.

That last clause is why this finding is not a happy one, and Part XII returns to it.

Part IX — What this does to the framework

Four amendments.

One: the horizontal function can be detached from the anchor entirely.

This project has treated the two as necessarily joined — an anchor authors titles, an interpretive class reads it, and the coordination among holders follows from that relation. France shows the coordination running for a century **without any of it**, on a code and a registry, through eight incompatible legitimating stories.

The amendment: **the horizontal function is a job, not a property of anchors**, and it can be discharged by any singular, consultable source that holders treat as authoritative — including one that makes no claim about the order of the world. Which reframes the modern state. Its distinctive achievement is not a better story. **It is that title was lifted out of the story and put somewhere the story's collapse could not reach.**

Two: a restored anchor is a different object from an old one.

The framework has said that elapsed time is a component of an anchor rather than a description of it, because the men an anchor must coordinate cannot be coordinated by a claim they watched being made. France adds the corollary: **they also cannot be fully coordinated by a claim they watched being unmade.** The Bourbon restoration had every property the framework requires and lasted fifteen years, because its removability had been publicly demonstrated within living memory. Interruption is not merely a gap in a record; it is a fact about the claim that everybody now knows.

Three: opacity of function makes competence look like parasitism.

The France Series' finding, given the framework's vocabulary: a settlement's success is measured by its cheapness, cheapness means invisibility, and an apparatus is therefore least visible exactly when it is working best. Which produces a systematic and dangerous illusion — **the better the coordination, the more the arrangement looks like pure extraction** — and predicts that apparatuses are most vulnerable to removal at their peak.

Four: the manufacture prediction is confirmed, and the variable is the stock.

Iran and France are two manufactures, both denounced as innovations by the existing interpretive establishment, both installed by men holding a state. Forty-seven

years and seven weeks. **The difference is entirely in what was assembled from**, which is the origin argument's central claim and which the project had not previously been able to isolate.

Part X — Predictions

Stated so that they can fail.

P1 — Manufactured grounds fail in inverse proportion to their borrowed material. Across cases, the survival of a deliberately installed legitimating claim should track the age, formedness and institutional carriage of the material it was assembled from — and claims assembled from nothing should fail within their author's tenure. *Falsified if* wholly novel grounds are found holding across a founder's death without any prior material and without being presented as recovery.

P2 — Registries survive the collapse of the stories above them. Where a title system has been codified and registered independently of any legitimating doctrine, successive regimes should inherit and apply it rather than reopen it, including regimes founded on repudiating the settlement it records. *Falsified if* incoming regimes routinely reopen registered title after a change of ground.

P3 — And the reason should be coalition size. Reopening should be avoided specifically where the register is comprehensive — covering all holders and all property — and attempted where it is partial, because a partial register produces a grievance coalition larger than the protection coalition. *Falsified if* comprehensive registers are reopened at rates comparable to partial ones.

P4 — Warrants conferred by a party to the contest are the most fragile of all. Rulers whose title is explicitly conferred by a domestic body should show markedly shorter tenure than those holding an inherited or plebiscitary claim, controlling for external shocks. *Falsified if* conferred titles prove as durable as inherited ones.

P5 — Restored anchors underperform uninterrupted ones. A legitimating claim that has been publicly abolished and then restored should show durability closer to a newly asserted claim than to an equally old but uninterrupted one. *Falsified if* restorations perform like continuities.

P6 — Apparatuses are most vulnerable at peak efficiency. Removals of coordinating machinery should cluster where the machinery was functioning well and its outputs were therefore invisible, rather than where it was failing visibly. *Falsified if* dismantling correlates with observable dysfunction.

P7 — Formation changes only by institution and only on a generational clock. Attempts to displace a population's formed belief should fail where they proceed by decree and persecution, and succeed only where a competing institution reaches the

next cohort at comparable depth and duration. *Falsified if* rapid decreed replacements are found taking hold within a founder's tenure.

And the account fails as a whole if this is found: a codified, comprehensive title registry systematically reopened by successive regimes without economic collapse — or a manufactured ground with no prior material, presented as new, that outlived its author and was still authorising titles two generations later.

Part XI — Where this is weak

Nine problems, three of them serious.

The Code is being credited with more than it did. French property was also protected by the interests of every purchaser of confiscated land, by the political impossibility of dispossessing them, and by the fact that the Restoration's own supporters included many who had bought. The Code may have registered a settlement that was politically unreopenable rather than making it so — and disentangling those requires a comparative case where a code existed and the settlement *was* reopened, which this study has not supplied.

"Eight regimes" is a count with a thumb on the scale. Some of the eight were brief and some overlapped; a different periodisation gives six or eleven. Nothing in the argument turns on the number, but it is doing rhetorical work it has not earned.

The Cult comparison flatters the framework. Seven weeks is a striking figure and it measures the fall of a man rather than the failure of a doctrine. Robespierre was destroyed by a coalition inside the Convention for reasons largely unrelated to the Cult, and a counterfactual in which he survived another year does not obviously produce a surviving religion — but nor does it obviously not.

The Vendée cannot bear the full weight placed on it. The rising had causes beyond religion — conscription above all, plus regional grievance, seigneurial patterns and the pattern of land sales — and reading it primarily as a refutation of a theory of belief selects one strand from a knot. The strand is real and the reading is defensible; it is not the only reading.

The death figures are contested and the genocide question is a live and bitter historiographical dispute. This study has given ranges and taken no position, which is the correct handling and also means the numbers cannot support any fine-grained claim.

The Restoration argument is post hoc. "A restored anchor is weaker than an uninterrupted one" was formulated after observing that this restoration was weak, and one case cannot establish it. What would test it is a set of restorations scored against comparable continuities.

And three that reach the foundations.

The first. **The decoupling thesis may be describing a stage rather than a structure.** France's register survived because no regime in the sequence had a

programme requiring its destruction. The twentieth century contains regimes that did have such programmes and acted on them, and a registry proved no protection at all in those cases. **A registry is a book**, and the claim that it is more robust than an anchor may hold only against the specific failure modes of anchors and not against a state that wants the entries changed.

The second. **The study reads a national settlement off a legal instrument** and has not established that the Code's authority was actually accepted at the level of the peasant proprietor rather than merely administered at the level of the notary. The framework's own strictures about transmission apparatus not being evidence of reception apply here to the study's central case, and are not answered.

The third. **France was chosen because the anchor collapsed and the register did not, and it is being used to argue that registers survive collapses.** That is selection on the outcome. A serious version would identify every early-modern codification and ask what happened to each when the story above it failed.

Part XII — The excluded, and the discipline

What this study has described as structurally predicted.

This project requires every study to name the people inside an order's coercive reach and outside its settlement, and this study incurs the obligation more heavily than most, because it has described a great deal of killing in the language of prediction.

The Terror. Part IV described a period in which no faction could author a title, and the framework's reading of the surveillance and execution apparatus that followed — the Committee of Public Safety, the Law of Suspects, the tribunals — is that it is the mass-side expenditure tell at its ceiling: an order that must watch everyone has announced that it has no formed belief, and the Republic was at year one on the formation curve governing a population somebody else had formed for thirteen centuries.

That is an explanation and it is not a mitigation, and the distinction has to be stated rather than assumed. Tens of thousands were executed and far more died in prison and in the repression of the provinces. Describing that as the predicted cost of governing a population you did not form, with a ground nobody holds, says something about the position the men in Paris occupied and nothing whatever in their defence. The framework does not hold that they had no choice; it holds that the choice they made was the expensive one available to men who had removed the cheap one.

The Vendée. This study has used a rising and its suppression as evidence about a theory of belief. What that suppression was, on the ground, was the systematic destruction of a region's population — columns burning villages, mass drownings at Nantes, and a toll in the low hundreds of thousands on the ranges historians give. The analytical point stands and the register in which it is made should not be allowed to do what analytical registers do, which is to make the dead into a demonstration.

The formed. Part VIII praises Ferry for changing a population's formation by building an institution that reached the next generation at the same depth as the one it displaced. Stated without euphemism, that is a state deciding what children will believe and building a machine to install it — and it is the same operation the Church had been performing for thirteen centuries and the same one this project finds in every

order it has studied. **That the method works is not a recommendation of it**, and a reader who takes Part VIII as a manual has read it wrongly.

The women of the Revolution, who appear in the universal words and were excluded from the settlement that followed, and whose political clubs were suppressed in 1793. **The enslaved of the French colonies**, freed by the Convention in 1794 and re-enslaved by Bonaparte in 1802 — which is the same man whose Code this study credits with securing property, securing it in that instance in persons, and which belongs in the account rather than beside it. **And the dead of the wars**, on the order of a million French and a great many more elsewhere, whom Part V describes in a clause about a personal authority consuming itself.

On the vocabulary. This study has called human beings a *formed population*, a *coalition of holders*, a *floor* and a *cohort*, and has described a famine as the discovery of coordination by its absence. That register is chosen because vagueness about mechanism has protected more atrocity than it has prevented. It makes suffering sound like a variable, and the debt should be paid once in plain words: the people who starved in 1793 starved, and the people in the Vendée were killed by soldiers of a republic that had promised them the rights of man.

Legibility is not pardon.

Conclusion

What did not move.

France between 1789 and 1871 gave eight different answers to the question of why anyone should be obeyed, and killed on the order of a million and a half people in the course of changing its mind. It is the only case in this project's archive where a settled order can be watched dissolving into a condition in which nobody could author a title, and then re-settling, in a literate state, with the records intact.

The radicals made one error in three registers, as the France Series established: they assumed that under each layer they removed lay a benign reality the layer merely masked. Remove the priest and a free rational citizen stands revealed; remove the apparatus and a people coordinates itself; remove the king and the visible great and power is gone. Each layer was load-bearing, and what lay beneath was a formed population that rose in the west, a famine, a currency that stopped meaning anything, and a vacancy into which force rushed.

And the framework adds why the error was so easy to make. **Coordination is invisible precisely while it works**, because everything it produces is an absence and absences are not observed — so an apparatus at peak competence looks exactly like pure extraction, and is therefore most vulnerable at its best.

Then they attempted to install a ground by decree, and produced the fastest failure in this project's archive. **The Cult of the Supreme Being had its festival on 8 June 1794 and its author was dead on 28 July.** Diocletian's manufactured cult outlived his abdication by nothing; Henry VIII's headship was demoted by his own daughter; Akbar's attestation died with him. Robespierre had more state apparatus than any of them — a national police, a controlled press, a new calendar, an army — and everything was held constant except the material. He had none. **The raw material of a ground cannot be manufactured; only its assembly can, and only out of something old.** Iran's clerical doctrine, assembled from a ninth-century occultation and a centuries-old juristic guardianship, has run forty-seven years. France minted, and got seven weeks, and the difference between those two numbers is the whole of the origin argument.

And the Vendée settled, in the one way such things are ever settled, whether the population had been duped. The radicals held that ordinary people were kept obedient by priests who did not believe, and that removing the priest would reveal the free

citizen. **They were sincere, they had a state, they acted on it, and the people rose in defence of the institution the theory said was oppressing them** — and were destroyed, in the largest killing of the period. The belief was in the people; the institution was its transmission and not its source. It is the only place in this archive where a theory of belief was tested as policy, and it is the case where the alternative account has a body count.

Then Bonaparte did three things, and the third is why this study exists.

He bought the old ground back on the old terms — nominating bishops while the Pope invested them, which is the arrangement of 1516 restored, retrofit rather than mint by a man who had just watched the mint fail. He rebuilt the apparatus with the Bourbons' own administrators, because the network had never been visible enough to be destroyed. And he promulgated a Civil Code that took the whole system of title — persons, property, contract, inheritance — out of the story entirely and put it in a text and a registry.

That is the horizontal function with the anchor removed. It requires no belief about why anyone should be obeyed, no interpretive class whose credential is at issue, and no cosmology; it is enforced against things rather than through deference. And it worked, through the fall of an empire, two restorations, two revolutions, a coup and a siege. The story above it changed eight times. **The register did not change once, and no regime — including the ones founded on repudiating the settlement it recorded — reopened it**, because reopening any title reopens the principle beneath all of them, and the coalition with an interest in that principle was every person in France who owned anything.

Which is the finding this project did not have, and it reframes what a modern state is. **Its distinctive achievement is not a better story about why it should be obeyed. It is that title was lifted out of the story and put where the story's collapse could not reach it** — and that is why economic life now proceeds serenely through political convulsions that would once have been existential, and equally why nothing in the durable layer answers the question of who should rule, so that question is never settled.

But a registry is not an anchor and the difference should be the last word. **An anchor can be doubted, contested, forked, defrocked or ridiculed, and this archive is a catalogue of those events; a registry cannot be disbelieved, because it makes no claim anybody could dissent from.** That is its strength. Its weakness is the same fact from the other side: it makes no claim at all, arbitrates no succession, restrains no apex, and forms nobody — and it is a book, kept by a state, in which whoever holds the pen can change an entry.

What has protected it is not its own authority. It is a coalition of everyone who owns something, which does not have to organise and does not have to act, and only has to keep believing that the entries will be honoured next year.

> ***The men fighting over the story had no quarrel with the register, and each of them needed it on the day he took power. That is the whole of why it survived — and it is not a guarantee of anything.***

A note on sources and scholarship

Every borrowed idea is explained in the text rather than invoked on authority; this note gives the references and the reservations.

On the framework. Possession and ownership, the anchor and its properties, the bystander mechanism, the found-ground argument and the impossibility of manufacturing raw material, the interpreter's two functions, credential distance, the floor as a nested settlement, the two audiences and the formation curve, and the *titled* position in which a conqueror issues deeds rather than seating men, are developed across this project's theoretical papers — principally *What Force Cannot Do*, which consolidates them, with *The Shape of the Sieve*, *The Distance to the Sword*, *The Guard That Cannot Be Turned*, *The Belief That Cannot Be Manufactured*, *What the Conqueror Cannot Author*, *Before the Furniture* and *A Bishop No King Could Make*. The underlying scholarship restated in compressed form is James D. Fearon on commitment problems (*International Organization*, 1995), Barry R. Weingast on coordination and shared standards (*American Political Science Review*, 1997), and Michael Suk-Young Chwe on ritual and common knowledge (*Rational Ritual*, 2001).

On the volume this study re-reads. *The France Series: The Craft They Couldn't Inherit* (this project, 2026), for the opacity of the network and of function; the account of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, the dechristianisation and the manufactured cults as a repetition of Diocletian's project; the Vendée as the structural confirmation that the population was formed; the single error in three registers; the convergence of surviving positions on a stabiliser; Napoleon's reconstruction as the Constantine move plus the Code plus the prefectures and the Bank; the reading of the cycling after 1815; and the Ferry Laws as the demonstration that formation changes by institution rather than decree. That volume carries its own sourcing and is left standing as written. This study supplies the decoupling thesis, the scoring of the eight arrangements by authorship, the Cult-versus-Iran control, the restored-anchor amendment, and the cheapness reading of opacity.

On the Concordat of 1801. Signed 15 July 1801 between the French Republic and Pius VII; the First Consul to nominate archbishops and bishops with canonical institution reserved to the Pope; diocesan boundaries redrawn to the departmental structure with a reduction in the number of sees; the state to pay clerical salaries; the Church to abandon claims to property confiscated after 1790 and not to trouble the

consciences of those who had purchased it; and bishops to swear an oath of obedience and loyalty to the government directly into the hands of the First Consul — follow the text of the Concordat and the standard reference accounts, checked for this study. The continuity with the **Concordat of Bologna of 1516**, under which the French government had nominated bishops while the papacy retained the power to depose, is noted in the standard literature and is the load-bearing point for Part V. The enabling legislation and the accompanying Organic Articles, promulgated in 1802, are not treated here.

On the manufactured cults. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy of 1790 and the oath it required; the dechristianisation campaign of 1793–94; the Cult of Reason; the Cult of the Supreme Being and its inaugural festival in Paris on **8 June 1794**; and the fall of Robespierre on 27 July with his execution the following day, follow the standard record. The Republican calendar's abolition of Sunday and its eventual replacement are noted in the Concordat literature.

On the Vendée. The rising of March 1793 and its suppression follow the standard historiography. Death-toll estimates vary very widely between historians and the question whether the repression constituted genocide is the subject of a long and unresolved dispute associated principally with the work of Reynald Secher and the responses to it. This study gives ranges, takes no position, and rests no fine-grained claim on the figures.

On the Civil Code. Promulgated in March 1804; unifying the customary and Roman-law regimes; confirming the revolutionary land settlement; abolishing feudal tenure; establishing partible inheritance; and setting out the law of persons, property, obligation and contract nationally. Its survival across subsequent regimes, and the absence of any general reopening of the revolutionary land settlement by the Restoration, follow the standard literature. The reading of the Code as a horizontal function detached from an anchor is this project's.

On the eight arrangements. The periodisation, the 1830 accession of Louis-Philippe as *King of the French* by act of the Chamber, the plebiscitary basis of both empires, and the Ferry Laws of the early 1880s establishing free, compulsory and secular primary education, follow the standard record and the France Series' own account.

On the comparative material. Diocletian's cult, Henry VIII's Supreme Headship, Akbar's *maḥẓar*, the Iranian doctrine of clerical rule and the Ottoman and Ganda title systems are treated with their own sourcing in this project's other studies, to which the reader is referred.

On what is not attempted. This study makes no claim to original research in French history, which it enters as a visitor and in which it relies on the standard literature and on this project's earlier volume. Its contribution is analytical: to identify a decoupling of the title system from the legitimating story that the framework had not allowed for; to isolate, by comparison with a case the project has struggled with, the variable that determines whether a manufactured ground survives; to record the one instance in the archive of a theory of popular belief being tested as policy; and to score a sequence of eight arrangements on a single structural variable.